

Alcohol Ordinance Public Listening Sessions

Date: August 23, 2017

Time: 2pm

Location: Savannah Civic Center

Summary:

- Introductions and Agenda Review – emphasis on this being a listening session for the City to hear input from the public. ([Reference Meeting PowerPoint for Additional Details](#))
 - Our Process
 - Ground rules
 - Background
 - Purpose of Ordinance
 - Establish reasonable and ascertainable standards for the regulation and control of alcohol beverages in a manner to promote health, safety and general welfare of the community, while giving effect to zoning and land use plans, preserving residential areas with reasonable consideration for their character and with the general intent of promoting desirable living conditions and sustaining the stability of neighborhoods and property values.
 - Data on Licensed Alcohol Establishments
 - Enforcement Actions
 - Listening Session: Additional Revisions to Ordinance?
 - Timeline and Next steps
- Process
 - Host public meetings & obtain feedback
 - Finalize possible revisions
 - Present to council
- Possible Revisions Bar Card – Public Dialogue
 - First Director Lidy reviewed the current language then opened the floor for comments
 - Public Input
 - Concern it takes too long to receive bar cards once applied for
 - Re-informed all present that the bar card provision is not currently being enforced
 - Trina from the Rail Pub noted:
 - The process seems like there is too much red tape and process involved to get a bar card
 - Employees should not have to be fingerprinted
 - Concerned about background checks as a requirement
 - Bar Cards are a good thing
 - If a server provides alcohol to someone under age it is a hit against the server and not the owners
 - Mike from the Georgia Restaurant Association notes:
 - City could move away from bar cards, but keep training expectations in the ordinance
 - Businesses would be responsible to have proof of employee training
 - Restaurants oppose a background check requirement
 - Sargent Young responded that the Chief would like to see background checks remain a requirement
 - TLC also opposes a bar card requirement

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- Sargent Young reviewed violations that would result in a bar card being denied
 - Convicted of a violent crime in 36 months
 - Convicted of drug possession in 36 months
 - Convicted of selling alcohol to a minor in 36 months
- Comment that this is a city of second chances
 - The current ordinance doesn't include an appeals process if the applicant is denied a bar card.
 - Recommendation that an appeals process be added.
- A member of the public requested the number of servers convicted found during compliance checks – Sargent Young did not have that information on hand, but said she could get it
- Bar cards worked well prior to 2017
- Concern that the ordinance is too broad if it requires all alcohol handlers to have a bar card. This could extend to dishwashers, house keepers, others that are not really involved in serving.
 - Too many employees would be required to have a bar card
 - Okay if required only of bartenders, managers and door staff
- Consideration to have a bar card grace period that would allow an employee to work while awaiting the City to complete processing the bar card.
- Question: How many people have been denied a bar card.
 - Answer: Exact number not on hand, but there have been several
- It is important that any serving alcohol are educated
- The bar card system is burdensome for employers
 - Seconded that bar cards should only be required for those who serve alcohol
- St. Patrick's Day wristbands
 - Handed out by the Riverfront Association
 - Those selling bands are required to have bar cards
- Industry people are in limbo, not knowing what the status is nor what to do
 - Recommendation that people visit the alcohol updates page on the website for regular updates
- Concern for those who have already applied for bar cards
 - Answer: Once revisions are completed those who have bar cards and those who have already applied will be recognized
- City Council had approved the 'ban the box' initiative removing the self-identification of felonies on job applications
 - Recommend bar cards consider second chances as well
- Ordinance should be equally applied: restaurants, package stores, etc.
- Concern that stewardesses serving alcohol on the tarmac would be required to have bar cards
- Public Input - Clarify language with under age drinking when kitchen closes
 - Consideration for bringing back the hybrid model
 - Concern around accuracy and ability to enforce the following: "No less than 50% of annual gross sales derived from sale of prepared food: When open to the public, mode of operation remains unchanged and full menu service available, persons under 21 not permitted at the bar."

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- Director Lidy noted that code enforcement will be bolstered as part of the City re-organization
- Noted that it seemed better under the old ordinance
 - Recommend the City revisit language from the previous ordinance
- Consider doing away with the language regarding “Full Menu Service”
- Emphasis on the need to keep it simple
- City should not recommend a set time
- Public Input – Examining Sunday Sales
 - Definition for “food” needs to be clarified
 - Noted this may be defined by state law
- Public Input - Consider changing sample sizes
 - Consideration to simply mirror state law
- Additional Thoughts from the Public
 - Provide more availability to those without kitchens to open Sunday
- Next Steps:
 - Timeline
 - Public Meeting: Aug 23, 2PM & 6PM Civic Center
 - Public Meeting: Sept 6, 2PM & 6PM Coastal Georgia Center
 - Submit Report to City Manager: Sept 15
 - Present to City Council:
 - 1st Reading - Sept 28
 - 2nd Reading - Oct 12
 - Outreach on Revisions: Oct 15-Dec 31
 - Keep informed at the City website: www.savannahga.gov/alcohol
 - Submit feedback to:
 - alcohol@savannahga.gov/912-525-1500

Date: August 23, 2017

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- Timeline and Next steps
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 - Present to council
- Parking Lot
 - Comment: There seems to be consistent confusion regarding the requirements in the alcohol ordinance. It would be helpful to have a quarterly information session to educate businesses on the requirements or a webpage with detailed information
- Possible Revisions Bar Card – Public Dialogue
 - First Director Lidy reviewed the current language then opened the floor for comments
 - Public Input
 - Comment – Bar Cards should not be required
 - Concern that bar cards and associated background checks will put people out of jobs
 - Discussion regarding virtual bar cards from Jim Deal
 - Consideration for using an online database of bar card holders
 - Increased efficiency
 - Easier for enforcement
 - Provides employment portability of training
 - Mike from the Georgia Restaurant Association
 - Bar Cards should be removed
 - Retain training requirements, but that information should be maintained by the employers
 - Consideration for ability of online training
 - Commenter was concerned that online training would not be as effective as in person training
 - Also noted that 36 months is appropriate duration for a background check
 - Ordinance needs to provide consistency from restaurants to package stores and retailers
 - City should provide consideration for an appeals process
 - Consideration for refining fines and penalties section
 - Deputy Assistant to the City Manager, Marty Johnson provided background on the need for bar cards
 - Comment – City should provide a grace period whereas an employee can work while awaiting their bar cards
 - Consideration for owner/licensee to have training
 - Concern that even if the servers are trained the training will not be as meaningful unless the culture of the employer aligns with the training
 - Cobb County currently requires this as a one time training for licensees
 - Douglas County requires licensees to take the training once every two years
 - Typical training is only three hours
 - Training is research based, focused on business culture
- Public Input - Clarify language with under age drinking when kitchen closes
 - Consideration to bring back the hybrid

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- But they don't want to pay the hybrid fee
 - Georgia Restaurant Association okay with it if "full menu service" wording is removed
 - More clearly define "bar area"
- Public Input – Sunday Sales
 - No Comment
- Additional Thoughts
 - Where does the bar card \$ go to?
 - Answer: Processing and background checks
 - Feedback: This is a good format for this type of meeting. This has been the "best meeting ever" on this topic
 - The time to get the bar cards from application to the recipient needs to be quicker
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